

## Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation (RICE)

As soon as possible after an injury, such as an ankle sprain, relieve pain and swelling with RICE—Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation.

**Rest.** Stop, change, or take a break from any activity that may be causing your pain or soreness.

**Ice.** Apply an ice pack immediately to prevent swelling. Apply 10 to 20 minutes, three or more times a day. After 48 to 72 hours, if swelling is gone, apply heat to the area that hurts. Do not apply ice or heat directly to the skin. Place a towel over the ice pack before applying it to the skin.

**Compression.** Compression with an elastic bandage will help decrease swelling. Don't wrap it too tightly, since this can cause more swelling below the affected area. Signs that the bandage is too tight include numbness, tingling, increased pain, coolness, or swelling in the area below the bandage.

**Elevation.** Elevate the injured area while applying ice and anytime you are sitting or lying down. Try to keep the area at or above the level of your heart to help minimize swelling.

SOURCE: WEB MD

## Workout Pain

It's a nice day and you've fallen off your exercise bandwagon (ok, it's been since February). Time to make up for that with a nice five-mile run, followed by some sit-ups and push-ups, just enough to get back into things. Two days later and you can't even get out of bed due to muscle soreness—what were you thinking! We often encounter delayed muscle onset soreness (DOMS) a few days after a workout, but what is it and is it a sign of a “good” workout?

DOMS is thought to be a result of small tearing of muscle fibers—the amount of tearing depends on how hard and long you exercise and what type of exercise you do. Activities in which muscles contract tend to cause the most soreness. Activities such as running downhill, lowering weights, and performing the downward movements of squats and push-ups can cause DOMS.

### Dealing With Soreness

Let's say you overdo it one weekend. Most experts state the soreness will go away in three to seven days with no special treatment. But there are some things you can do that may reduce the soreness and speed your recovery.

First, avoid any activity that increases pain, but you can still workout. By doing low-impact activities such as biking or walking, blood flow can be increased to the muscles, which may help soreness.

Applying ice, gently stretching, and massaging the affected muscles can help. Also, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications like aspirin or ibuprofen may reduce the soreness temporarily, though they won't actually speed healing. Finally, allow the soreness to subside before vigorously exercising, and stretch and warm-up beforehand. If pain lasts longer than about seven days or increases despite these measures, consult your physician.

SOURCE: Physician and Sports Medicine, 1999





## All About Asthma

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that makes breathing difficult.

During an episode of asthma, the lining of the airways becomes inflamed and swollen. Surrounding muscles become tighter so that the airways are even narrower. A thick mucus is also produced, which further blocks breathing. Typical symptoms include shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, wheezing and coughing.

The exact cause of asthma is not known, but it does seem to run in families. Although asthma cannot be cured, its symptoms can be controlled with the help of your doctor and a management plan.

Patients with asthma may be supersensitive to various substances and environmental conditions that are normally harmless. Some common triggers may include pollen, animal dander, dust and dust mites as well as irritants such as smoke, fumes and strong odors. Other triggers can be changes in the weather and temperature, certain drugs, and food additives.

Some asthma symptoms may occur at night and be caused by triggers in the bedroom, a late response to triggers exposed to during the day, heartburn and even the drop in body temperature that occurs during sleep.

Some people experience symptoms during and after exercise. Attacks usually reach their peak about 5 to 10 minutes after a person stops exercising and continues for another 20 to 30 minutes. If untreated, exercise-induced asthma can prevent the person from participating in many activities he or she enjoys.

A doctor can evaluate the situation and help an asthma patient manage these symptoms. For example, the management may include an assessment of the current activity level and advice about pacing and rest during exercise and other activities, warm-ups and cool-downs, and other ways to control the symptoms while allowing a person to engage in activities.



## Managing Your Asthma

### Keep A Daily Diary

Record what triggers your condition.

List your daily symptoms and the actions you take to relieve them.

Keep track of your daily peak flow using a peak flow meter. (A peak flow meter is a device that measures asthma the same way a blood pressure cuff measures blood pressure.)

List your medications and how often and how much you use them.

Write down your questions and problems.

Take this diary with you to your doctor.

### Talk To Your Doctor

Find a doctor you feel comfortable talking with and who will answer your questions.

Discuss what triggers your asthma.

Find out what to expect from your asthma management plan.

Get written instructions or take notes yourself on medications & peak flow meters.

Work out an emergency plan.

### Talk To Your Employer

Make sure you understand your coverage with your company's health insurance plan. Find out what special disease management programs may be offered by your employer or through your health insurer or a local hospital.

